

Hobbies

No, White Castle has not gone into the rare-coin business

By Roger Boye

Here are answers to more questions about coins and paper money.

Q—What does a coin dealer mean when he calls some old silver dollars “sliders” and “whizzed”?

G.H., Chicago

A—“Sliders” are nice-looking coins that just miss the uncirculated (“mint state”) category because of a slight rub or minute wear. A “whizzed” silver dollar has been treated with a fine wire brush to hide worn spots, making the coin appear to be uncirculated when it’s really not.

Q—We have three tiny coins inscribed “California gold” and

“50,” all dated 1854. What can you tell us about them?

H.N., Elgin

A—The California gold rush of the mid-1800s created an acute shortage of government coinage in the West, forcing some businesses to make small-denomination coins that often included the words “California gold.” Today, authentic specimens of the various 50-cent denominations retail for at least \$100 each. Thousands of valueless imitations have been produced in recent years.

Q—Are dollar bills without “In God We Trust” on the back side considered misprints?

J.R., Wheaton

A—No. The motto was first used on \$1 silver certificates in

1957, and on the \$5, \$10 and \$20 Federal Reserve notes in 1963. Bills made before then aren’t supposed to have a motto.

Q—I’ve found a Lincoln cent dated 1979 with a grooved edge, like a quarter, rather than a smooth edge. Could it be rare? It looks like a normal penny in all other respects.

F.B., Bloomington

A—Most likely, someone “doctored” your coin in a machine shop. As such, it has no special value to a collector.

Q—Is there any way to get dirt spots out of a large \$1 bill of

series 1917?

F.N., Chicago

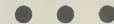
A—Some collectors wash paper money with a mild soap in warm water, making sure the bill is flattened as it dries. But no amount of cleaning will restore a badly tattered bill, and many experts believe a wash can do more harm than good.

Q—What’s the difference between the American Numismatic Society and the American Numismatic Association?

R.T., Chicago

A—The New York-based ANS is devoted to research about

coins and related items, while the ANA promotes hobby aspects of collecting. The ANA in Colorado Springs, Colo., has nearly 30,000 members, several times the size of the ANS.



Want to know how much your old coins are worth? Send your questions to Roger Boye, Chicago Tribune, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60611. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want a personal reply and allow at least three weeks for the answer.